

Derek Wallbank, *MinnPost*

WASHINGTON - Rep. Betty McCollum's amendment to strip the Army's sponsorship of NASCAR driver Ryan Newman's #39 Chevrolet went nowhere in the House, but now a fact-checking website has validated the figures underlying her argument.

McCollum, in a statement, said the Army spent \$7 million a year as the principal sponsor for Newman's car, a claim the Pulitzer-winning PolitiFact fact-checking service run by the St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times rates as True. It was the first statement of McCollum's that PolitiFact has rated.

Wrote PolitiFact:

The NASCAR sponsorship was cited many times during the recent House of Representatives deliberations on budget cuts. During one round of budget-cutting in February 2011, the House voted to slice more than \$61 billion from the budget, but it spared the money that the Army pays to sponsor Newman's NASCAR team.

The Army has sponsored various NASCAR teams for many years and has sponsored Newman's for the past two years. Backers of the expenditure say sponsorship pays off in recruiting leads. "Last year alone, the U.S. Army's motor sports programs generated more than 46,000 qualified leads, more than 1,300 pledges of support from key business and community leaders, and more than 484 million media impressions (34 million of which offered specific Army recruiting messages)," said Newman in a website discussion.

A spokesman for Stewart Hass Racing confirmed that the Army pays \$7.4 million for its co-sponsorship.....

We won't weigh in on the debate over whether the Army's money is well spent or not. When it comes to the dollars, though, McCollum is on the mark, so we rate this statement True.